

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, in view of the present amendments and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

This Amendment is submitted in accordance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.116, which after final rejection permits the entry of amendments canceling claims, complying with any requirement of form expressly set forth in a previous Office Action or presenting rejected claims in better form for consideration on appeal. The present Amendment places the claims in condition for allowance without requiring further search and/or consideration. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that the present Amendment be entered under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116.

After entry of this Amendment, Claims 1-6, 10, and 21 are pending. Claims 1, 10, and 21 are amended, and Claims 7-9 and 11-20 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. No new matter is introduced.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1-7, 11, and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Langlais et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,091,932, hereafter “Langlais”) in view of Erich et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2005/0265220, hereafter “Erich”) and Saito et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0081689, hereafter “Saito”); Claim 8 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Langlais, Erich, and Saito in further view of Malkemes et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0107986, hereafter “Malkemes”) and the Background section; and Claims 9-10 were objected to for depending from rejected base claims, but otherwise indicated as allowable.

The indication of allowable subject matter is gratefully acknowledged. In response, and to expedite the issuance of a patent from the present application, Claims 1 and 21 are amended to incorporate the allowable features of Claim 9 and intervening Claims 7 and 8. Further, Claim 10 is amended to incorporate the features of Claims 1, 7, and 8 and recast in

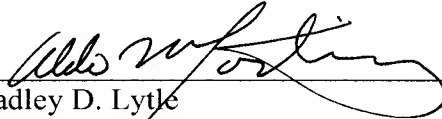
independent form. Claims 7-9 and 11-20 are also canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Thus, it is believed that all pending claims are now in condition for formal allowance.

For the reasons discussed above, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application, and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. Therefore, a Notice of Allowance for Claims 1-6, 10, and 21 is earnestly solicited.

Should, however, the above distinctions be found unpersuasive, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner provide an explanation via Advisory Action under MPEP § 714.13 specifically rebutting the points raised herein.

Respectfully submitted,

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